

Numbers 16:36-50 - Thursday, September 23rd, 2010

- Tonight, we'll pick it up where we left off last Thursday, and by way of both a review and introduction recap verses one through 34.
- What I want to do before we complete chapters 16 and 17 is look at the practical application as it relates to all the detailed information.
- It seems quite clear that the lesson here is how rebellion has an anatomy. What I mean by that is, this chapter puts a face on rebellion.
- In verses 1-3, we see the face of what rebellion is, in verses 4-11 we see what rebellion will do, in verses 12-14 we see what rebellion will "not" do, in verses 15-27 we see what rebellion does cause, and in verses 28-33 we see what rebellion doesn't cause.

Verses 1-3 - Rebellion is ...

1. Infighting and insurrection in the family of God. (Korah was Moses' cousin)
2. Brazen and disrespectful towards those in positions of authority. (One translation says they became insolent)
3. Exalting one's self, and thinks more highly of himself than it ought. (Those raised up for - rise up before Moses - and against Moses)
4. Seemingly justified by virtue of the "numbers" involved. (They make this public including 250 leaders)
5. Attracted to those who are well known and well liked in the community. (Korah wants Moses' popularity)
6. Able to attract a following because it comes from "leadership". (Korah was in a position of leadership)
7. A group that comes with an agenda to oppose
8. "An angel of light" representing many others in the community and from the congregation
9. Wanting to make the rules and decisions. It sees the one who does have that authority as lording it over
10. Clever to distort the facts, accusing the self-abasing of being self-exalting, and abusing of that God given authority

Verses 4-11 - Rebellion will ...

1. Never get down on its face before God; it will get in the face of man. (Moses goes down as they rise up.)
2. Never ask if, or admit to any wrong. (Moses did nothing wrong, he was a proven leader, not a perfect leader).
3. Not be teachable or correctable. (Moses knows he can't show or tell them anything, but the Lord can and will).
4. Be obstinate in the rightness of their cause and their campaign. (Moses is confident in his God and his calling).
5. Masquerade in a false cloak of humility and hyper-spirituality. (Moses is God's man; he walks near to the Lord).
6. Invite confrontation and conflict. (Moses rebukes Korah and his followers dictating to them what to do).
7. Twist the facts and turn it around. (Moses exposes them for accusing him of what they themselves are guilty of).
8. Never be satisfied with, or grateful for anything. (Moses says; "isn't it enough for you that _____").
9. Try to get something it thinks it deserves to have. (Moses says; "now you are trying to get _____").
10. Band together never once thinking it's against the Lord. (Moses knows it's not personal; it comes with the turf).
11. Always grumble against the authorities family. (Moses asks; "why attack Aaron")?

Verses 12-14 - Rebellion won't ...

1. Come to a resolution or genuine reconciliation, but Godly sorry and repentance can bring a true restoration.
2. Speak truth, but will "lie, accuse, and confuse". (Egypt flows with milk and honey? It's Moses' fault?)
3. Keep the main thing the main thing, but will bring another thing into it so as to place the onus on the other.
4. Be honest and have integrity but will create question and doubt about the honesty and integrity of the other.
5. See things clearly and will accuse the other who doesn't see it their way of being the blind leading the blind.
6. Want to see the light and will refuse to come to or stay at anything that would shed light/Bible on the matter.

Verses 15-27 - Rebellion does ...

1. Make the one who has not wronged respond in righteous anger.
2. Imply and state that the one in authority has no right to "take away" anything, so much as a donkey.
3. Have to answer to and appear before the Lord one day.
4. Eventually get what it thinks it needs, wants, and deserves, but ultimately it leads to a disastrous peril.
5. Separate many from the assembly; some never come back putting an end to fellowship even if it happens once.
6. Pretend to feel for and have concern for the "entire assembly," but it's a false humility with no basis in reality.
7. Not take ownership, or responsibility for the destruction that one man can have on an entire assembly.
8. Not "get away with it, or get a way to find out about it, rather it just gets swept away in it".
9. Not heed the warning to "stay out of it, it gets caught up in it when it stays in "touch" with it.
10. Stumble, embitter, and destroy wives, children, and even little ones by cutting them off from fellowship.

Verses 28-35 - Rebellion doesn't ...

1. Have any idea that the Lord uses the Moses' of this world as "heavenly sandpaper" to do things.
2. See the Lord using it to validate, prove, authorize, and establish His calling on the Moses' that He's called.
3. Understand how it could be that the Lord is going to "bring about something totally new" from this.
4. Think it could ever be treating the Lord with contempt, it only thinks of itself and is never content.
5. Have any ground to stand on, but will most certainly split apart and take with it those who surround it.
6. Take responsibility for taking down families who are innocently caught up and get swallowed up in it.
7. Realize that it eventually will all start to close in, and come crashing down when it's all said and done.
8. Take ownership for all the people that were consumed by it and are now gone from the community of believers.

- Now, having just put a face on rebellion let's continue on and complete chapter 16, and Lord willing chapter 17, as we see what's next.

36 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 37 "Tell Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, to pick up the censers out of the blaze, for they are holy, and scatter the fire some distance away. 38 The censers of these men who sinned against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar. Because they presented them before the LORD, therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel." 39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned up had presented, and they were hammered out as a covering on the altar, 40 to be a memorial to the children of Israel that no outsider, who is not a descendant of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the LORD, that he might not become like Korah and his companions, just as the LORD had said to him through Moses.

- I find it interesting that Moses would say they had "sinned against their own souls." In other words, this sin cost them their very souls.
- The missing component in our sin and rebellion against God is that it's also against us in that it may not only cost us, but actually kill us.
- Now we see how they are told to gather the censers and hammer them into plates as a memorial to Israel as a covering for the altar.

41 On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD."

- This verse is utterly astonishing. After what had happened the day before the Israelites complain to, and blame both Moses and Aaron.
- They start accusing Moses and Aaron of killing Korah and all the others who had exalted themselves in the rebellion against the Lord.
- In other words, they actually believe that Moses and Aaron caused the earth to split and swallow them up and have fire consume them.
- In my quest to understand how they would believe this the only thing I come up with is that rebellion removes God from the equation.

"Wonderful audacity! Yesterday they fled in terror while they saw the earth open and swallow up the rebels and now they, themselves, break out into revolt, and charge Moses with murdering those whom the Lord, Himself, so justly executed. Is there any bound to human sin? Lions and tigers may be tamed, but man breaks off from all restraint, and follows his own devices, despite every warning and instruction."

Charles Spurgeon

42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting. 44 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces.

- Here we go again. This is déjà vu all over again. Even Moses and Aaron do the same thing they did yesterday and fall on their faces.
- This is interesting because God in effect is saying those who take the side of the rebellious are just as guilty as if they were rebellious.

46 So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun." 47 Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped.

- It's important to understand that Aaron, as the High Priest, is the only one who can make atonement for them as the plague has begun.
- He does so by running in the midst of the assembly with incense and stands between the dead and the living which ends the plague.
- What a beautiful picture of our great High Priest, Jesus the Christ who stands between the dead and living ending the plague of our sin.

"Aaron wisely puts himself in the pathway of the plague. It came on, cutting down all before it, and there stood Aaron the interposer with arms outstretched and censer swinging towards the heaven, interposing himself between the darts of death and the people. 'If there be darts that must fly,' he seemed to say, 'let them pierce me; or let the incense shield both me and the people.'"

Charles Spurgeon

"If Aaron the high priest, with his censer and incense, could disarm the wrath of an insulted, angry Deity, so that a guilty people, who deserved nothing but destruction, should be spared; how much more effectual may we expect the great atonement to be which was made by the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Aaron was only the type! The sacrifices of living animals pointed out the death of Christ on the cross; the incense, his intercession. Through his death salvation is purchased for the world; by his intercession the offending children of men are spared."

Adam Clarke

49 Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident.

50 So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped.

- 14,700 people is shy of about half of the population of Kaneohe proper, when you think about it; that is a lot of people all dying at once.
- However, absent the "life and death" intercession, it could have been considerably more because there are 2-3 million children of Israel.

"Who slew all these? Or rather, what slew them? Was it not sin which is a murderer from the beginning? Sin will slay us also unless we are sheltered behind our great High Priest."

Charles Spurgeon